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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 000474

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DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AND AF/SPG, NEA
FOR DAS GGRAY
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - GARBLED TEXT

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: NAFIE COMPLAINS OF PERCEPTION PROBLEM IN DARFUR

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (C) Summary: The situation in Darfur is better than what is being reported, Presidential Advisor and NCP leader Nafie Ali Nafie told CDA Fernandez during a meeting March 31. Nafie blamed international NGOs for distorting the image of what is happening in Darfur said that if the international community would only put pressure on the rebels, there would be peace in Darfur. Nafie claimed that JEM is the only remaining rebel movement with any power and that SLA/AW is now quiet in Jebel Marra while Abdelwahid pursues talks with the UN/AU mediation. However Nafie accused Minni Minawi of not abiding by agreements and said that Chad must be given "support" so that President Deby will no longer have to rely on the Zaghawa. He viewed Libya as crucial to the Darfur peace process because Qadhafi is "influential on Idriss and the rebels" but admitted End summary.

¶12. (C) Presidential Advisor Dr. Nafie Ali Nafie claimed that the situation in Darfur is "better than what is being reported" and that international NGOs with "political motivations" are creating a distorted image of what is happening in Darfur. "They should be more balanced," complained Nafie, "but they write what they think will be accepted." CDA acknowledged that the situation in Darfur is different now than three years ago, but pointed out that the GOS needs to develop a strategy for breaking its bad image, including doing everything possible to assist IDPs who blame Khartoum for what has happened in Darfur. Further, CDA pointed out that despite the fact that UNAMID is having deployment problems due to logistical challenges, the GOS needs to be seen doing everything possible to facilitate deployment. He also pointed to disproportional attacks by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in February in West Darfur. While these were in response to a JEM rebel offensive, they caused massive new IDPs and loss of innocent life. And they returned the ugly violence of Darfur to the headlines.

¶13. (C) Nafie acknowledged that any mistake made by the GOS will be magnified. "We must control the army and the PDF, and we must make efforts at peace," he exclaimed. "You may not think so but we are working to rein them in and there is internal discussion and pressure to quietly discipline those who exceed orders." However Nafie complained that when JEM took control of Sirba, Silea, and Abu Sirouj by force with the support of Chad, no one in the international community

complained (NOTE: This is true). "Are we wrong to take back territory that was taken from us by force?" Urging balanced criticism of the belligerents, Nafie said that his government must exchange information with UNAMID so that there will be a more accurate picture of events on the ground. "They need to be told what is going on, so that they know who should be forced to change their behavior." He warned that JEM was planning new attacks, including deep into Kordofan and these would be dealt with ruthlessly.

¶4. (C) Nafie urged that if the U.S. would only put pressure on the rebels, there would be peace in Darfur. He characterized JEM as the "only remaining rebel group with any real power actively fighting," and suggested that the U.S. should be talking to Khalil Ibrahim to push him toward peace talks. Nafie observed that "Abdelwahid's people in Eastern Jebel Marra are quiet," there is an informal cease-fire in that area and that Abdelwahid himself is now more open to talks with the UN/AU negotiators. "However some people who have signed agreements are not abiding by them," said Nafie, in reference to Senior Presidential Advisor and SLM leader Minni Minawi. Nafie asked rhetorically "how long should we be tolerant of these gangs who rob aid convoys and create instability?" and observed that "Minawi's heart is with JEM and President Deby." Turning to the issue of Zaghawa tribal loyalty and President Deby, Nafie suggested that if Deby were "given some support" to help him out from under the pressure he is under from his own Zaghawa tribe, he might be more committed to peace with Sudan. "We don't have any special interest in the Chadian rebels," claimed Nafie. CDA Fernandez answered that, while we understand the long history of Chad and Sudan interfering in each others affairs, the fall of Deby at the hands of Khartoum-supported rebels is unacceptable to us. Any chance of an American-Sudanese dialogue will end with such an unfortunate event. Nafie said that the Sudanese Government understood this.

¶5. (C) Pressed on regional issues, Nafie admitted that Libya's role in Darfur is underestimated, "both with their relationship with Deby and with many of the Zaghawa rebel groups." It is the Zaghawa who militarily lead the rebellion in Darfur. When asked about Libyan military support for the rebels, Nafie responded, "here I will be less forthcoming, but I don't agree with anything you have said about this matter." He added that Libya's public rhetoric don't always match their private actions. "We would welcome you talking quietly to the Libyans about this," he added. MFA U/S Siddiq was less coy in an earlier meeting admitting that Libya is the main source of weapons for Darfur's rebels - through Deby and directly. Siddiq also asked for quiet American diplomacy with the Libyans to dry up these sources.

¶6. (C) Nafie admitted that Sudan was worried about the lack of progress on the peace talks front. Rebel disunity actually works in their favor, "it keeps the pot boiling" and the rebels in play with the constant possibility of violence by the rebels and then an overreaction by the Sudanese Government. "We are the ones who feel hemmed in, we want to end this but others want to keep it going." He noted the "bandits and hijackers" plaguing Darfur, these are your rebels, he snorted.

¶7. (C) Comment: The NCP regime wants to improve its image, but it remains a question whether this brutal regime will actually be willing to improve its behavior. That a regime "hard-liner" would acknowledge openly that the regime needs to control the army and the popular defense forces is undoubtedly meant for consumption by the US in advance of possible talks on the bilateral relationship. Nafie's observations on the Zaghawa are more candid and accurate, however. It's true that Deby would not be under so much pressure from his own tribe if he did not have Chadian rebel forces bearing down on him, but then again Sudan has been laying on the pressure by arming the Chadian rebels. He was also honest about Minnawi's "disloyalty" and about Libyan arms for Zaghawa rebels such as SLA/Unity. Nafie seems to believe that if Sudan can secure an agreement from Deby to marginalize and cut off JEM, it will face little resistance

from rebels in Darfur and may be able to make headway on a peace agreement that would satisfy the international community - and the U.S. End comment.

FERNANDEZ